

# COVID-19 Vaccination Guidance for Arizona Courts

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(Version 2.0, as of March 29, 2021)



**Arizona Supreme Court**

COVID-19 Continuity of Court Operations During a Public Health Emergency Workgroup  
March 29, 2021

## Purpose and Date of Information

This document is a product of the COVID-19 Continuity of Court Operations During a Public Health Emergency Workgroup (Plan B Workgroup) and is intended to provide guidance to local courts in Arizona regarding issues relating to COVID-19 vaccinations. This guidance, as of March 29, 2021, provides local courts with suggestions in dealing with the COVID-19 vaccines, their administration, and related issues.

Because information regarding COVID-19, vaccines, side effects, mitigation strategies, etc., is in an ever-changing state of flux, in conjunction with this guidance, users are strongly encouraged to consult other reliable resources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), state and local health departments, local legal and risk management entities, and new information as it becomes available, including reference to updates in the weblinks included in this document.

This version 2.0 is current as of March 29, 2021 and replaces the original document, which was current as of February 1, 2021. For ease of reference, new or different information and changes of consequence, when compared to the February 1, 2021 document, are underlined. Otherwise, the text of this version 2.0 remains unchanged compared to the February 1, 2021 document.

Issuance of this version 2.0 is prompted by recent developments, including:

1. The issuance of [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#) by the CDC on March 8, 2021.
2. An update to the Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Office of the Courts Health Screening Protocols. These protocols replace the health screening protocols in Administrative Directive 2020-22, issued October 23, 2020. The updates account for changes in federal guidance related to fully vaccinated persons, close contact, and quarantine recommendations.
3. The emergency use authorization (EUA) by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration of a third vaccine, the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, on February 27, 2021.

## Vaccine Background

Presently, three COVID-19 vaccines, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, and the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine have received EUA by the FDA.<sup>1</sup> For an EUA to be issued for a vaccine, “the FDA must determine that the known and potential benefits outweigh the known and potential risks of the vaccine.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The FDA defines an EUA as “a mechanism to facilitate the availability and use of medical countermeasures, including vaccines, during public health emergencies, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.” ([Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccines Explained | FDA](#) (last visited March 29, 2021)) Under an EUA, the FDA can allow the unapproved use of medical products, or unapproved uses of approved medical products, in an emergency when there are no adequate, approved, and available alternatives. *Id.*

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

The COVID-19 vaccines underwent a rigorous development process that included tens of thousands of study participants to generate the data necessary for the FDA to comprehensively evaluate the quality and consistency of the vaccines.<sup>3</sup> The COVID-19 vaccines that have received an EUA are being held to the same safety standards as all vaccines.<sup>4</sup>

Both the Pfizer and the Moderna COVID-19 vaccines require two injections, taken approximately three to four weeks apart. The Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine requires only one injection. In the United States, these vaccines are being prioritized and made available to various populations through a phased approach. In Arizona, judicial branch employees were among those eligible to become vaccinated in the initial phase of the vaccine allocation.

## Vaccine Side Effects

The COVID-19 vaccines are designed to create resistance to, and eliminate the spread of, COVID-19, which is reported to have caused more than 546,000 COVID-related deaths in the United States, has caused significant health issues in considerably more individuals, and has strained the healthcare system throughout the country.<sup>5</sup> Courts should be mindful, however, that COVID-19 vaccines may cause side effects and that some commonly reported side effects of the vaccines tend to mimic COVID-19 symptoms. For the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, side effects have been reported after both doses, with side effects much more pronounced after the second dose.<sup>6</sup>

Common side effects of the vaccines are:

- Pain/swelling/redness at the injection site
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Muscle pain
- Chills
- Joint pain
- Swollen lymph nodes in the same arm as the injection
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Fever<sup>7</sup>

Because these side effects overlap with the symptoms of COVID-19, court staff should not come to work if they are exhibiting any of the side effects listed.

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/VaccinateWConfidence-Immunization-Coordiators\\_508.pptx](https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/downloads/VaccinateWConfidence-Immunization-Coordiators_508.pptx) (last visited March 29, 2021)

<sup>5</sup> [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) | CDC](#) (last visited March 29, 2021)

<sup>6</sup> [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine | FDA](#) and [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine | FDA](#) (last visited March 29, 2021)

<sup>7</sup> [Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine | FDA](#) (last visited March 29, 2021)

## Recommendations to Continue Efficient Court Operations

Courts are essential to delivering justice, from protecting the rights of criminal defendants, to protecting children and families in juvenile courts, to resolving civil and other disputes. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Arizona courts have remained open and have made adjustments to protect the health of court staff and the public they serve. Accordingly, the following recommendations are designed to help continue efficient court operations.

- With vaccine availability expanding, courts should regularly communicate vaccine information to staff, including how to schedule vaccinations.
- Courts should plan for the likelihood of staff absences following a COVID-19 vaccination due to side effects. Early and frequent communication with staff will be key.
- Courts should implement strategies to mitigate the impact of such absences and resulting staff shortages. Such strategies include staggering the recipients of the vaccine so that all staff from a single department or unit are not all vaccinated at the same time. The CDC indicates that this may be more important when coordinating the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.
- Courts should provide frequent updates to staff regarding vaccinations so that they can make an informed decision on whether to get vaccinated. The CDC has made available a [Communication Toolkit](#) that may be useful. Other resources are:
  - [Stopping the COVID-19 Pandemic Is Going to Take All of Our Tools \(cdc.gov\)](#)
  - [Three Reasons You Are Top Priority for COVID-19 Vaccination \(cdc.gov\)](#)
  - [Answering Your Questions About the New COVID-19 Vaccines \(cdc.gov\)](#)
  - [Communication Resources for COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)
- The following document may be helpful in explaining the process used to develop and test the COVID-19 vaccine and how it differs from the development of other vaccines.
  - [Emergency Use Authorization for Vaccines Explained | FDA](#)
- People are not considered fully vaccinated until two weeks after the second dose of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and two weeks after the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, and the extent and duration of protection are unknown at this time, so courts should continue to follow and enforce COVID-19 safety protocols regarding social distancing, masks, hand hygiene, etc.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, courts should continue to follow the requirements of the Supreme Court's Administrative Order, *Authorizing Limitation of Court Operations During a Public Health Emergency and Transition to Resumption of Certain Operations*.
- When inquiring with employees about vaccinations, side effects, and COVID-19 symptoms, courts should keep in mind that certain measures must be taken to comply with Equal Employment Opportunity laws, the Americans with Disabilities Act, medical privacy laws, and other legal requirements. Courts should work with local public health departments and human resources for specific questions, but an FAQ on these topics can be viewed here:

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<sup>8</sup> [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated | CDC](#) (last visited March 29, 2021)

- [What You Should Know About COVID-19 and the ADA, the Rehabilitation Act, and Other EEO Laws | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(eeoc.gov\)](#)

## Other Resources

[Key Things to Know About COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

[Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

[Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine | CDC](#)

[Different COVID-19 Vaccines | CDC](#)

[COVID-19 vaccine: Separating myths from facts - Sanford Health News](#)

[ADHS - Highlighted Infectious Diseases for Arizona - Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) - Coronavirus Home \(azdhs.gov\)](#)

[Arizona Supreme Court Administrative Orders Index](#)